



## City of Durham Durham County

### Joint News Release

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## Combined City-County Survey Shows Residents Happy with Durham

*Durham's Image Perception Rises by 27 Percent Since 2005*

DURHAM, N.C. – Just-released results of the 2015 City-County resident satisfaction survey indicate that 8 of 10 residents feel Durham is a good-to-excellent place to live and work. This is the first-ever combined satisfaction survey that reveals how residents feel about Durham as a community.

“While the survey asked many of the same questions that we’ve asked in the past about City government services, this time, we joined with Durham County government to gauge how residents, including those who live outside of the city limits, feel about specific services offered by the County, such as library and social services,” said City Manager Tom Bonfield. “The overall results provide a great picture of, not only resident satisfaction, but also how we should view community priorities.”

A major theme that emerged from the survey indicated that residents still enjoy living, working, and playing in Durham, with 7-of-10 respondents being satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of life in Durham, a 23 percent increase over the last decade. However, residents held to their desires from the 2013 survey to see more done about the city’s traffic flow, street maintenance, and public safety, indicating that those areas should receive more emphasis over the next two years.

While not much has changed in some areas since the last City survey, with the highest level of satisfaction with fire protection and solid waste services, this year residents also indicated they were most pleased with Durham County Emergency Management Services, as well as Durham County Library Services, with 8-in-10 residents satisfied or very satisfied with the programs and services.

In the area of public safety, 91 percent of city and county respondents indicated they felt safe walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day. Also, 64 percent and 62 percent of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the Sheriff's Office and Police Department's relationship with the community, respectively.

Results from the 2015 survey indicate that satisfaction increased in 47 of 53 areas since 2005, with one area remaining steady, and five showing decline since 2005. The highest increase was in the overall image of the city, with a 27 percent increase, and the most significant decline, 12 percent, was access to training for the under- and unemployed. Other areas residents said they'd like to see improvements were in City customer service and communications – with the most significant declines in the ease of contacting employees and the effectiveness of communications, both dropping by 7 percent and 10 percent, respectively.

While survey information will enable Durham leaders to use resources more strategically to improve programs and services, the [ETC Institute](#), which conducted the survey, says Durham's overall satisfaction rankings continue to stand out among communities of similar size, such as Arlington, Va., Fort Lauderdale, FL, and St. Louis, MO.

"The survey findings indicated that Durham is still headed in the right direction as a community," said Durham County Manager Wendell Davis. "Oftentimes, we as public servants see distinctive lines between City and County services, but the community doesn't view it as such. The survey shows opportunities where both governments can and should work together to make our community better."

Areas that influence overall perception of Durham also ranked highly, with 70 percent to 80 percent of respondents satisfied with the quality of life in their own specific neighborhoods or in Durham. Additionally, a little more than 60 percent were happy with the overall quality of services provided by both the City and County. Other 2015 combined City and County results showed:

- **Priorities for respondents willing to pay higher taxes:**
  - Road improvements: 75 percent
  - Infrastructure repair: 61 percent
  - Trails and greenways: 57 percent

- Construction of new sidewalks: 48 percent
- **Government news sources:**
  - Local television and radio news: 70 percent
  - Friends and neighbors 51 percent
  - Local newspapers 47 percent
- **Affordable housing:** 34 percent respondents dissatisfied with the availability of affordable housing
- **Biking:** 45 percent dissatisfied with the ease of travel by biking
- **Code enforcement:** 39 percent satisfied with response time

A randomly selected sample of 679 Durham households completed the survey in November and December 2015, with 479 from city residents, and 200 from residents living outside of city limits. The survey has a 95 percent level of confidence, +/- 3.8 percent. Full results of the City survey are now available on the City's [website](#). The County's survey results can be found on the County's [website](#).

### **About the City of Durham Budget & Management Services Department**

The [Budget and Management Services Department](#) is responsible for the development and oversight of the [City's annual budget](#) and [Capital Improvement Program \(CIP\)](#). The department is also responsible for performance management, continuous improvement, and strategic planning. Guided by the City's [Strategic Plan](#), which the department established and maintains, the department helps to ensure that the City of Durham is an [innovative and high-performing organization](#) by working with City departments to build and implement performance measurement monitoring and evaluation.

### **About the Durham County Manager's Office**

The [Durham County Manager's Office](#) is responsible for providing overall management and coordination of all county operations and for ensuring efficient and effective implementation all Board of County Commissioners' policies and directives. The County Manager's Office identifies, recommends and monitors financial, capital, human and strategic resources to meet current and future needs of Durham County residents in a timely and satisfactory manner. To learn more, visit <http://dconc.gov>.

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